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ADDRESS

TO THE

Preachers,

OFFICE-BEARERS, AND MEMBERS

OF THE

WESLEYAN METHODIST SOCIETIES.

BY THE

REV. R. AITKEN, A.M.

“Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.”—MATTHEW v. 9.

LONDON:

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J. Thompson (late Everett and Thompson), Printer,
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AN ADDRESS,

&c.

MY beloved Brethren, I should but ill discharge my duty to God, and give you a very equivocal proof of my affection, did I refuse to contribute my mite of consideration to the momentous subjects which have so long and so violently agitated the connexion. I have said, Refuse to contribute; because I have been called upon since my arrival in England, by parties deeply interested in the disputation, to throw together my ideas on the subject, and to give them publicity; in the hope that a middle ground may be discovered, which the moderate men of both parties will gladly occupy, and thus put an end at once and for ever to the unnatural and anti-christian contentions which have exposed us to the ridicule of the world, and sickened the hearts of the simple-minded throughout the society. I exceedingly regret that I

have only a few hours to bestow upon a subject important enough to occupy a stronger and a clearer head for as many weeks: but I trust the Lord will take the matter up, and get himself glory through the very weakness of the instrument.

If I rightly understand the matter, the members of what is called the Wesleyan Association aver, that the practice of Methodism is not what it formerly was; and that the existing laws of Methodism are not honestly adhered to and acted upon; and that in consequence of this departure from former usage and established law, they are aggrieved, and the work of God is retarded.

Now it is not for me to say whether Methodism is, or is not, what it once was; much less shall I venture to determine what is and what is not Methodism. But this much I will say,—and I know that I am speaking the truth,—Methodism is not what it might be; Methodism is not what it ought to be.

Whether the laws or the government, or both or neither, be at fault, I shall not now stop to enquire: but the simple fact, that three hundred thousand souls professing themselves soldiers for Christ, and incorporated for the purpose of forwarding

the work of God, make so proportionably small an impression upon the world,—pluck so comparatively few brands from the burning,—seeing God is evidently with them, and seeing too that they stand upon such vantage ground that one man might chase a thousand; this simple fact, I say, is evidence enough to satisfy me, that something in Methodism is either seriously wrong, or that something is wanting to perfect its efficiency.

I mean not to draw an invidious comparison, but to make my position good. And that the littleness of work done by the Methodist society may be indisputably apparent, let us take the case of that society calling themselves the Primitive Methodists. In the space of eighteen years, they have risen from nothing to fifty thousand members. This fifty thousand, during the last year, has gained an increase of six thousand members and upwards. To keep pace with this body, the Methodists ought to have an increase of thirty six thousand members. I ask, have they such an increase, or have they ever had such an increase? And let it be remarked, that in connexion with this comparison two or three important facts must be taken into

the account. The Methodists are a better educated body than the Primitives; the local brethren of the former are in easier circumstances than those of the latter, and can consequently better spare time for ministerial labour; and the Methodists have ten times larger pecuniary resources, from the opulence of many of their members, for carrying their plans into successful operation. In the face of these facts I am not afraid to pronounce, from what has come under my own eye, that the Primitive Methodists are not the best governed body in the world: their polity might be vastly improved, and their effectiveness considerably advanced. What other opinion then can I possibly form, than that I have formed of a less effective body, of Methodism as it is?

Beloved Brethren, the man that feels a deep interest in the work of God,—and I believe many of you do so,—the man that looks with a spiritual, and consequently with a pitying, eye on the millions of his fellows around him who are hurrying hellward;—that man has a right to weep and to complain, and that bitterly too, if he is convinced that this state of things is induced by the negligence, by the factious

spirit, or by the misrule, of any part of the body with which he is associated ; and I may add, he is answerable to God for his supineness, if he does not make use of every means within his reach, which the religion of Jesus Christ sanctions, to bring about a better order of things. I have never yet met with a Methodist, whether preacher or member, who did not readily allow that it would be nothing more than God has a right to expect from us, and nothing more than we have a right to expect from God, if every member of society who knows the Lord savingly, should lead at least one soul to Jesus Christ in the course of twelve months. Brethren, twenty of us on an average do not carry a single limb ; and yet we will talk of the glory of Methodism as it is.

This brings us to the very point which every party would be at :—*What is the cause of the present inefficiency of Methodism ?* Before the question is well put, there are fifty answers to it. Every man has his blame, and he has determined where to lay it, too. Every man has his remedy, and he has resolved that his, and his only, shall be applied.

My beloved Brethren, it is with the

deepest sorrow that I glance at this part of the disputation. No war, it is said, is equal to a holy war: and if we look to the unsanctified weapons that have been wielded on both sides, never was there a more unholy warfare than this. There is such a want of Christian temper, Christian charity, and gospel bearing; and there is such abundance of evil surmising and virulent invective, in almost every page of the controversy; that if there could be sorrow in heaven, Mr. Wesley, yea, the blessed Jesus himself, would blot out the record of the whole transaction with his tears. On one hand the cry is, The preachers alone are to be blamed; they care not for souls; they are tyrants, and are seeking to lord it over God's heritage: give us defensive laws. On the other hand, Turbulent spirits have long been amongst us; they have hitherto acted as a dead weight upon Methodism; their aim is the subversion of the whole system; and we will never do well until we get rid of them.

Whether there be any or much truth on either side, it is entirely foreign to my purpose to enquire. But I think you must allow, that calling each other names, unchristianizing each other, and rending

asunder the family of Christ, is a strange beginning of reform, and a very unlikely plan of rendering Methodism more effective than it is. The truth is, if we would find out the root of the evil, we must go deeper than any of the disputants have yet gone. If we want a remedy, we need not expect to find it in their nostrums. But, my Brethren, although I am convinced that the cause of the marvellous inefficiency of Methodism, and the cause of the present dissensions, are two perfectly distinct things, and that they have in fact very little influence upon each other; still it is impossible for us to have prosperity until we have peace; and peace we are not likely to have, so long as we have any plausible ground for contention amongst us: for Satan will never allow it to remain unoccupied, when it serves his end to set us by the ears. Let then the matters in dispute be at once set at rest; and let the adjustment be of that liberal, mutually confiding nature, that an enemy cannot get his finger into a single crevice to sow a seed of future dissension.

Blessed be God, while some are fighting, many are praying; and although this unhappy business has proceeded to an awful length, and although at this very moment

each party is standing in the attitude of defiance, I do not despair of an adjustment; because I have children of God to deal with. If I could only persuade you to lay aside the wisdom of the world and the spirit of the world, and to enter upon the consideration of the subject in the light of the judgment day, and in the spirit of our Master, a very few hours would settle the whole affair.

Come then, my beloved Brethren, concede this my most reasonable demand: let us have no more of the spirit of the devil; let us have the spirit of Christ. Let us have no more of the wisdom of this world; let us have the wisdom of God. Let each party determine to seek not their own things, as they have hitherto been doing, but the things of one another. In the genuine spirit of the gospel, let the study of the one be, How much can I give? and of the other, How little can I be satisfied with? Let there be a meeting of each others' views, an allowance for each others' prejudices and habits of thinking. Let self and selfish ends be lost sight of, and the glory of God be our object, and then the peace of Zion will be speedily restored. I entreat you, my Brethren, in the name of Jesus,

our common, our beloved Master; in the name of Jesus, who laid down his life for you, and who has told you that ye ought to lay down your lives for each other—you perceive there is no quarrelling here;—in the name of Jesus, who prayed that you might all be one, as he and the Father are one, and that your unity might convince the world that God has sent his Son; in the name of Jesus, who has promised to perfect you in one, and who has said, Love one another; bear each others' burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ: I conjure you for your souls' sake, for the sake of every soul in the connexion, for the sake of the souls in the world, make a strenuous, a simultaneous effort to heal the breaches of Zion, to crush the bone of contention, by applying an immediate remedy to the grievances complained of; for, be they real or be they imaginary, they have been the cause of scandalous dissension, and they will certainly lead to interminable agitation.

O my Brethren, let the world which has been pointing at us for several months and saying, See how these Christians differ, be constrained to cry out, See how these Christians can forgive each other, and how their very contentions have been overruled to the

strengthening of their cause, and to the glory of their Master.

My dear Brethren, you have it in your power, at small expense, to achieve a splendid victory over yourselves, over one another, over the devil, and over the world: but if instead of victory, which you can secure by acting in accordance with the spirit of Christ, you make choice of strife and shame, the sure consequences of the gratification of your own spirit, God will have a stronger controversy with you both, than you have had with each other. I would have you to understand that Methodism does not belong to you: it is not the creature of Mr. Wesley. God has given Methodism to the world for the purpose of evangelizing it; and if you, Preachers, Trustees, Leaders, and Members, to whom is committed the present use and guardianship of it,—if you, instead of using it diligently for the conversion of souls, shall begin to contend whether its outer garments shall be cut according to the fashion of the past or the present age: whether it shall have a tory hat, or a radical pair of shoes; who shall put on its coat, and who shall put on its stomacher: let me tell you, God will not hold you guiltless of the blood of the souls that ought to have been

saved while you have been quarrelling about these paltry trifles, although you may be pleased to call them the vitals of the system. And let me tell you farther, if you shall refuse to make an effort to restore peace to the Church of Christ; nay, if you reject the use of any means that are not sinful, or refuse to make any sacrifice and every concession that have not guilt in them, to accomplish this purpose, I am persuaded that God will soon convince you, that he can do without you, and that Methodism can do without you, and that he is not at a loss for instruments to compass the peace of his people and the prosperity of his work. These are strong sayings, but they are kind ones : it is the language of a friend and not of an enemy ; and having given you this assurance, (which may the Lord give you charity to receive in good faith), let us proceed to the consideration of what may be safely conceded by one party, without affecting the vitals of Methodism ; and what ought to be received as the *summum* of every reasonable demand by the other.

First then : *Is lay delegation a reasonable demand ; and ought it to be conceded by the Conference ?* I know very little of Conference business, or of the manner in which it

is at present conducted : but I have my own idea of what ought to be its business, and of the great care, time, and pains that should be bestowed upon it; and I hesitate not to say, that it would be well if the temporal and spiritual business of Conference could be prevented from interfering with each other ; for where so much is to be done, even under the best management, there is a great danger of one thing occupying the time which ought to be given to another. My opinion is, that laymen ought not to intermeddle with the spiritual business of the Conference ; and that the preachers should very thankfully resign the management of the temporal concerns of the connexion, as it would give them more time to attend to matters of higher importance.

I think few men will be found disposed to question the correctness of my opinion on this subject, if they will refer to the word of God, or the history of the church in past ages ; and particularly, if they take a view of the great and important spiritual business that ought to be deliberated in Conference. For instance : the ministerial conduct of every preacher in the connexion should be strictly enquired into, and his individual character and habits, together with

his present actual advancement in the divine life, be ascertained. *Before* he be re-appointed to his former circuit, or named for another, it should be known whether God has recognized the labours of the Stationing Committee of the former year in his individual case ; whether, in short, God has owned the preacher's labours, by giving him seals to his ministry ; and out of the result of this investigation arises a grave and exceedingly important question—Which is the most suitable station for him during the following year ? Now here is at once a mass of business of the most difficult and important kind ; and it cannot possibly be well done in a short space of time.

Again, it is the business of Conference to enquire minutely into the state of the work of God in every circuit throughout the connexion, and to devise such plans as may appear best suited to their peculiar and varied wants and circumstances. It is the business of Conference to examine the candidates for the ministry, and the young preachers who have been upon trial ; to exert their combined wisdom in framing measures for the farther extension of the work of God at home and abroad ; and to sit as a court of appeal in matters purely

spiritual: and it ought to be the business of Conference to spend three, four, or six days, as their time would allow, in mourning for the sins of the people, and in crying to Almighty God to pour out his Spirit upon themselves, upon the churches, and upon the whole world. Here is weighty work, and plenty of it. Here is work which must be well done, else the interests of religion will suffer. And here is work with which no layman has a right to interfere.

But *what is to become of the temporalities of the connexion?* Whatever becomes of them, I am sure that ministers of the gospel have no time to attend to them. I believe the very naming of them in an assembly engaged in the business we have been alluding to, would cramp the operations of the Spirit and profane the hallowed atmosphere. And I trust and believe, that the great bulk of the Preachers have hitherto entered upon the consideration of the subject with reluctance, and from a necessity for so doing being laid upon them. But what say the Scriptures? If the Preachers administer to your spiritual wants, it is a small matter, and it is the order of God, that you should carefully

and liberally look to their temporal comforts. Preachers must not be entangled with the things of this life; else they can never acquit themselves to the satisfaction of Christ. They have not time to serve tables. Paul had not even leisure to baptize; so crowded in his eye was the road to hell, and so intent was he upon saving sinners. Preachers, God has commanded you to proclaim the good tidings every where, in season and out of season; to open the eyes of the blind; to raise the dead: but you will not find a clause in our whole commission which authorizes us to interfere with the temporalities of the church.

But *what plan can be adopted to remedy the inconvenience of the present system?* I shall present you with two; and if a better can be suggested, let it be acted upon.

Let seven persons of good report be sought out and appointed by the quarterly meeting, to transact the temporal business of each circuit. Let these seven elect one of their number as the delegate of the lay district. Let the delegates assembled in their district meeting, elect one of their number as their representative at the Lay Conference, to be held annually at the same city or town, and at the same time,

as the Spiritual Conference: and to remedy the inconvenience of men being appointed to this Lay Conference who are unacquainted with the routine of the business of the connexion, let only one half of the delegates retire annually; or, in other words, after the first year, when one half of the members have gone out of office, let the election for subsequent delegates be obligatory for two years: and until the system be properly organized, let a committee of twenty Preachers render the lay delegates their best assistance.

Take another plan. If a Lay Conference be objected to, the principle of laymen forming a part of the committees of Conference for general business, has been long recognized and acted upon. Hitherto the lay committee men have been chosen by the Conference: in future, let one half of the members of every such committee be properly accredited laymen, elected as has been proposed in the former plan. If lay delegation, on such a scale as either of the plans which I have suggested, would give satisfaction, why should it not be immediately adopted? I believe it would be a great blessing to the Preachers and to the connexion.

The next question upon which there is a difference of opinion is this : *Who are the members of the quarterly meeting, and what is their business and power?* I should be sorry if this question were legislated upon under an impression that there is any thing in the relative situations of Preachers and Leaders, that is calculated to bring them into collision, or that will warrant them to regard each other's privileges with suspicion. Thank God, the present state of things is a rare one in the annals of Methodism : and a law ought not to be made to meet the peculiarities of an extreme and rare case. The suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* is sometimes a necessary evil ; but it is nevertheless an evil, and would never be tolerated as the law of the land. Let the law then affecting quarterly meetings be made for children of God, and not for children of the devil. Let there be liberty: and when that liberty is abused, it will be time enough to summon a convocation of laymen and ministers to enact a law for the suppression of the abuse. As at present, let the Preacher be the chairman of the meeting; and let the Leaders, Local Preachers, Trustees, and Stewards be the authorized members. Let the examination

into character, diligence, faithfulness, and usefulness be the first business of the day ; and if this be properly done, there will be little time and less disposition for vain and useless jangling. Let there be free discussion : but let the chairman have the option of bringing every matter to the vote, to prevent the time of the meeting from being taken up with unprofitable matter. Nevertheless, every vote of a majority shall have its full weight as far as that may go.

But, *shall the sentence, as well as the guilt, of an accused party be determined by a majority of the meeting ?* If we had a criminal code, in which the penalty for specific crimes were clearly laid down, I should say, No : but let the power of mitigation rest with the chairman. But if such a code cannot be drawn up,—although I am the last man in the world to advocate a laxity of discipline,—I would say, There is so great a danger of injuring the usefulness of the Preacher, and of inducing dissatisfaction ; that, were I in the chairman's situation, I should be glad that the majority of the meeting should share the responsibility, lest I should be the means of rooting up the wheat with the tares.

After examining this subject with all the

acumen that I am capable of, I can see no way of restricting the business of the quarter day, or of lessening the weight of its majorities, than by making an apparently ugly invasion upon the freedom of the meeting; and of two evils I would undoubtedly choose the lesser. I would curtail the present power of the chairman, rather than have an undefined boundary which every turbulent spirit might clamour against, and convert at his will into a ground of agitation and strife.

There is one more observation, however, that I would make upon this subject. I would not suffer the quarterly meeting to attack the conduct or the character of a Preacher. The district meeting is the place where that should be enquired into: every man must be tried by his peers. Nor would I suffer the quarterly meeting to censure or approve of the sentence of the district meeting or the Conference; for this would be erecting a tribunal over these two courts, which would be contrary to all usage, equity, and decency. Nevertheless, I would give the quarterly meeting a power respectfully to petition both the district meeting and the Conference in behalf of any convicted Preacher: and

their recommendation to mercy could not fail to have its due weight. Unless this be law, every accused or convicted Preacher might, through his partisans, throw the whole connexion into a ferment.

I have no fear of throwing open the quarterly meetings, if the two measures which I have recommended, or something like them, be passed into a law. I am convinced that there will be little left for any reasonable men to demand at the quarter day; and should it ever so happen that the Leaders and Local Preachers, or a majority of them throughout the connexion, should fall into such a spirit as to make demands that would be likely to prove detrimental to the cause of God, I have a remedy at hand. Let the members in every circuit in the connexion choose a layman, and let the Conference appoint an equal number of Preachers; and let the matter be discussed and decided upon in this general council or convocation. But I am persuaded that this will never be necessary, until vital godliness has left the society: and the society without vital godliness is not worthy of a thought.

Now then: will these two measures—lay delegation, or lay committees, restricted

to the management of temporalities ; and the throwing open of the quarterly meetings ;—will these two measures, I say, restore political peace to the connexion ? I believe they will. I am sure they will. Will there not be a strife about the subject of appeal from the Leaders' and Local Preachers' meetings, and from the quarterly meetings ? Certainly not, if temporalities and spiritualities are kept apart. In all matters of finance let the appeal be to the lay district or the Lay Conference, or to the semi-lay committees ; and in matters purely spiritual, to the districts and Conference, as at present constituted.

The solemn question now is—*Can the Conference concede these two measures, without the sacrifice of principle, and without injuring what is called the constitution of Methodism ?* This word, if I mistake not, is a new term in Methodism ; and it is difficult to say what is meant by it. It conveys to my mind a system of restrictions, a system of laws of man's making, based upon worldly-derived wisdom, that has little kindred with that catholicism of spirit which is set forth in the gospel of Christ. Be this as it may, these measures cannot injuriously affect our class meetings, our band meetings, our

prayer meetings, our penitent meetings, our lovefeasts, our fastdays, our watchnights, our sacraments, and our public ordinances. They will not alter the terms of admission into society, our mode of calling Preachers to the work of the ministry, our Christian discipline as laid down in Mr. Wesley's rules. They cannot take away our hymn book, our bible, or prevent us from preaching a present, a free, and a full salvation. These are the essentials, the vitals, of Methodism : and so long as we use them well, and work them well, they will never be taken from us. It is a charge of unfaithfulness against God, it is a libel upon Methodism, it is an insult to common sense, to imagine, that a majority of Leaders and Local Preachers could be found in any circuit, who would dare to attack through the quarterly meeting, or by any other way, this blessed fabric of God's erecting. Should Satan tempt them to make the experiment, an indignant connexion, and an offended God, would stand betwixt them and their work of sacrilege. Men in the heat of argument in defence of their preconceived opinions, may draw upon their imaginations, and present us with hideous phantoms of anarchy and confusion.

I tell you, Preachers and laymen, do your duty, and God will defend your out-works. You have been paying too much attention and attaching too much importance to externals. Do your duty to the millions of perishing souls in your own country, and to the hundreds of millions in foreign lands. Let every Preacher give his whole time and his whole soul to the work, and every layman his whole property to the work, and God will provide you bulwarks better than ten thousand defensive laws. He himself will be a wall of fire around you, and the glory in the midst of you.

My beloved fellow labourers in the ministry, thank God, we can preach the words of eternal life, and there is none to restrain us. What would the primitive godly fathers have given for this liberty ? and how little do we value it. Thank God, we can lead perishing souls to Jesus Christ, and there is none to hinder us. We can examine the classes ; we can advise the societies ; we can visit the people from house to house ; we can commune with the holy, pray with and for the sinner ; we can extend the conquests of Immanuel, and build up God's children in their most holy faith, and all the powers of earth and hell cannot successfully oppose

us. Nay, this very work of ours is a sure stepping stone to the confidence and the hearts of the people. What would we more? Any other business than this is foreign to our calling. Any other means of government is disgraceful to our profession.

Preachers of the gospel of peace, the societies are distracted; thousands of your flocks have already left your fold, and are as sheep without a shepherd. I do not say that you have driven them away; but I do say, you can bring them back. And are your political rights to be weighed against the peace of the connexion, and the salvation of thousands of souls, though you could prove to a demonstration that you only want your reasonable rights? Is it not your duty to set an example? Let sacrifice begin with you.

Ministers of Christ, I tell you what I know. Yesterday, on my arrival in this country, I was brought into contact with twenty or thirty leaders, who have been ejected from the society. They were men who loved me, men who have often helped me in the work of God, men who love you, men who love Methodism; but men who will think for themselves. I went amongst them in the spirit of conciliation,

to entreat them kindly, to soften down asperities, to lessen existing differences; but I found that they had brooded over what they conceive to be their wrongs, till their minds could think of nothing else, their tongues could speak of nothing else. The scriptural injunctions, Bear all things; bless them whom you conceive to persecute you; when you are reviled, revile not again: these commands of their Lord appeared to fall as an empty sound upon their ear, and they were disposed to think that I was making a mock at their calamity. Servants of the living God, these men have souls; thousands are under their influence; they have minds that yet may be of mighty avail in the cause of God; and if you do not stop the system of agitation in which they have embarked,—and you alone can do it,—you will make demons of them all; and where, where will their blood lie? O my God, my God, ease me of my burden; else my heart will break. On the judgment day, when God brings this charge against you, The diseased have ye not strengthened; neither have ye healed that which was sick; neither have ye bound up that which was broken; neither have ye brought back that which was driven away; neither have ye

sought that which was lost: it will be a poor affair to say, we could not listen to the demands of illegal meetings; we could not sacrifice political principle, political consistency, and political rights.

My beloved Brethren, I call God to witness, that I love you as I love my own soul, for your works' sake, for your Master's sake, aye, and many of you for your own sake. I will let the weakest of you put his foot upon my neck; but I will not hesitate to run the risk of offending you by my importunity, whilst perishing thousands are before my mind's eye, and whilst I have the conviction that you can save them. Conference, the eyes of the connexion, the eyes of the world, the eye of God, is upon you. The destiny of thousands who have joined the Association, and the decision of thousands more who have not joined it, are suspended to the result of your deliberations. May the God of your fathers overrule them for the peace of Jerusalem, and the prosperity of Zion.

Members of the Association, my work would be but half done, did I not speak to you. Whether the end you have in view be a reasonable or just one, or not, the means that you have chosen to adopt to effectuate

it are sinful in their nature, and destructive in their operation. If your ministers have thrust you out of society wrongfully ; if, as you allege, eight hundred Preachers have entered into a combination, and publicly pledged themselves to each other to withstand your just demands ; if they have used their influence as ministers of Christ, to bring over a portion of the laity to sanction their measures : what does all this amount to, were it even true to the very letter ? It amounts to this,—they have erred. But may not their error be the effect of erroneous judgment ? You dare not deny it. If even this were not the case, are you justified in returning evil for evil ? Is this your religion ? It is not mine : it is not Christ's. Instead of making your complaint to God, you have made it to the world. Instead of engaging God on your side, you have tried to enlist the world. Instead of weeping over and trying to conceal the errors and faults of your Preachers, you have proclaimed them upon the house-top. God has given many of you a talent ; it has been improved in his service. He has taught you to embody your thoughts in language, to the astonishment of the wise of this world ; and you have taken this talent, and used it as an in-

strument of contention. Satan has raised up many political demagogues ; but he never had such a glorious company as now : and to make them more efficient in his service, he has cast the halo of the name of martyrs around them.

When Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitfield had the doors of the church shut against them, what was their conduct ? They owed nothing to the church. The church at that time scarcely deserved to be called a Christian community. Some of the ministers of the church headed the very mobs that went out against them. But what was their conduct ? They sought not to enlist the feelings of the world on their side ; they attempted not to get possession of the churches ; they never complained of their wrongs ; they reviled not again. Wherever they found a Christian man they said, Come not with us, but stay where you are, and do all the good you can. They went into the streets and the market-places ; and, freed from ecclesiastical tyranny, they used their liberty in making bold attacks upon the world ; in calling sinners to repentance. Contrast your conduct with theirs ; and, instead of the high tone you are now assuming, you will soon be humble enough. The very

men who were the instruments of your conversion, you have publicly reprobated, and held up to the scorn of the world. The family of God have you divided against itself; and the very lambs of the flock you have seduced from the fold. I love your souls, but I will oppose your measures. I pity your case, but I abhor your conduct. I will give my life to restore you to your privileges, but I will not injure my conscience by attempting to justify your procedure, or by palliating your crimes: and I will oppose you in your work of agitation to the utmost in my power. I entreat you for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for the sake of your own souls and the souls of others, cease from agitation. If you will not eat of the good pastures, but upon certain conditions; tread not down that which might satisfy many an hungry soul. If you will not drink of the deep waters; foul not the grateful stream with your feet.

In conclusion, beloved Brethren,—Preachers and laymen,—I have recommended two measures for your consideration by way of settling your differences. So far as I am personally concerned, I have no interest in either of them; and if you can find out any easier or better ground

for agreement, I am content. About the political part of Methodism I am perfectly indifferent, any further than this: I want a settlement of differences, that we may have peace; for without peace we cannot have prosperity. There is, however, a reform in Methodism that I want; and God being my helper, I shall see it before I die. I want to see more spirituality, more pity for perishing souls, less conformity to the world, more faith, more zeal, more love, more holiness, both amongst Preachers and people. Without this, reform is a name, a pretty plaything, that Satan will try to amuse you with, while he is running off with his victims.

I cannot now enter upon the plans I would adopt to effectuate this reform. I have not even time to read over the manuscript I have already written; nor shall I have an opportunity of correcting the proof sheets. You have, however, the substance of what I would counsel; and my heart is in my cry for peace, and may your God and my God hear and answer it.

